



FE Week 'has a go' for Colleges Week

See page 14

FE Week hands-on at Labour Party Conference

See page 16



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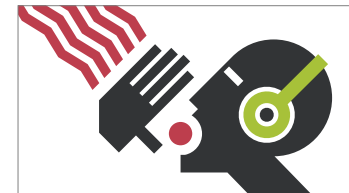
FE Week comment



Readers who leave comments on website win an exclusive mug

Page 3

FE Week agitator



Colleges Week is a constipated, false celebration, IMHO

Page 7

FE Week explores



As another college drops the word 'college', we ask what's in a name?

Pages 8 & 9

FE Week and me



It's not too late for students to enter this exciting competition

Page 20

inside...

Size does matter!



FE Week has increased its paper weight by 15 per cent and page count from 16 to 20! #FurtherEd

Unemployment 'free-for-all'

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Skills Funding Agency to announce further fee changes for adult learners

Colleges will be able to claim full course funding for unemployed learners following a policy update by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Leaked email correspondence between the SFA's Learner Services Adviser, Geoff Evans, Head of Learner Services, Jackie Vosper, and Gaynor Field, Head of Funding Systems confirms the changes in late August 2011.

The following update was sent out to SFA staff: "Colleges and training organisations have the discretion to fully fund individuals who are unemployed and need skills training to help them enter work."

"It is recognised that this discretion is mainly for those in direct receipt of a state benefit, but could also apply to other individuals who are unemployed and need skills

training to help them enter work."

It later adds: "Unemployed status and the need for skills training to help them enter work would be confirmed by the individual in the form of a self-declaration to the college or training organisation."

The policy update means that colleges can now claim full funding for students in the 2011/12 academic year, provided the learner self-declares they are intending to seek work at the end of their course.

The revision also means that learners no longer have to be on state benefits to be eligible for fully funded learning.

The SFA says the changes are a further clarification of the announcement made by John Hayes, Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning,

through the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) in 'freedom for skills for employment and growth'.

Adrian Cottrell, Director of Finance and Corporate Services at Canterbury College, said: "It's good news for learners, but it's very late in the day to make such profound changes."

"A lot of colleges will find that they've already filled courses and that the change comes a bit too late for them."

Toni Pearce, Vice President for Further Education (FE) in the NUS, added: "It is welcome that the SFA has finally seen sense and done the right thing, by relaxing of punitive criteria to open funded further education opportunities to a wider

pool of adults who wish to improve their skills and employability."

The update gives FE providers the choice of whether or not they refund learners that have already been enrolled.

Colleges can, if they wish, keep any fees they have already received from learners, as well as retrospectively claim the full funding for students who will be seeking work once their course finishes.

A spokesperson from the SFA said: "The decision to collect or waive fees for unemployed people looking for work is at the discretion of the college or training organisation."

"Tuition fees collected by providers must be managed in line with our published. . .

Story continued on page 2



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Forecasts suggest there are simply fewer 16-18 year-olds

Nick Reinis
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Declining teenage population numbers could be playing a significant role in student shortfalls.

Figures compiled by the Office for National Statistics in a UK National Population Projection show the number of 16 to 18-year-olds could fall by more than 90,000 from 2011 to 2015 - from 2,279,948 to 2,186,192.

Experts believe this could have an impact on recruitment figures for further education (FE) and sixth form colleges.

Last week, *FE Week* revealed colleges are facing a significant shortfall following a report by the funding consultancy, and publisher of *FE Week*, Lsect.

The survey, completed by more than 100 FE and sixth form colleges, reported a shortfall - at the time - of 20,319 students.

Initially, the blame was partly placed on the government decision to axe the education maintenance allowance (EMA), which paid up to £30 a week to poorer students, with other issues such as schools marketing themselves better to their pre-16 students.

However, Rob Elliott, product manager for Capita Further and Higher Education, which works hand-in-hand with colleges to help improve business decisions, said demographics could have an impact on college recruitment.

He said: "Every year we look at the issues in the market.

"It was highlighted a couple of years ago that there is this decline (in 16 to 18 year-olds) coming along.

"This must be having an influence on recruitment."

The theory is backed by David Igoe, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum, who is leading a comprehensive survey into recruitment figures.

He said: "I feel it is having an impact.

"But it's not just from our survey, but also data from the YPLA and the national statistics.

"This has been well-known and we are expecting quite a big decline in the demographics, and then it will go back up again."

However, the pair also blames a number of other issues.

Mr Igoe said: "Although early in our survey stage, colleges seem to be reporting two issues. One is the EMA and the other is higher education tuition fees."

Meanwhile, Mr Elliott said: "There are the other points in there as well. The (cut of the) EMA I'm sure is having an impact.

"It's also not necessarily schools marketing themselves better, but it's the Department of Education promoting that side too, such as the work on free schools."

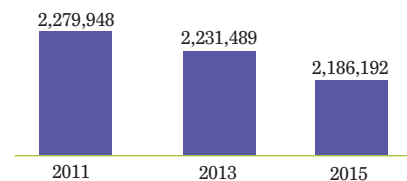
A follow-up survey this week, again conducted by Lsect, shows a slight improvement on last week's figures.

In all, more than half - 58 per cent - of the 102 colleges who responded say their recruitment figures have "improved a little", while only two per cent say they have "improved a lot" on last week's statistics.

Meanwhile, 11 per cent say their figures are "a little worse because of withdrawals" with one "a lot worse". The remainder say they have either not improved, or were on or above their target last week.

The demographics

UK National Population Projection (16-18 year-olds)
Source: ONS



See more research stats on page 10 & 11

FE Week news in brief

Not a happy holiday

Employees at Darlington College are being asked to take eight days of unpaid leave in a bid to save money.

As reported in The Northern Echo, the college has published a consultation that would force over 500 workers to take holiday without pay.

The proposal is in reaction to a contract which the college lost to train Army recruits.

DfE denies FoI from AoC

The Department for Education (DfE) has declined a Freedom of Information request submitted by the Association of Colleges (AoC).

The AoC asked to see the list of applications to set up free schools for 16-19 year-olds next September, but the DfE has refused to disclose details.

Vandals confuse new college for mosque

Bournville College was vandalised several times last week after youths mistook one of the buildings for a mosque (as reported in the Birmingham Mail).

The golden conference centre in Birmingham, which opened this month as part of a £1 billion regeneration of the area, has had windows smashed and panels ripped off on numerous occasions.



BBC Radio 4 Apprentice programme sparks debate

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

funding requirements."

The open guidelines give colleges a moral decision over what they feel is an appropriate refunds policy.

A spokesperson from the AoC said: "As autonomous bodies it is up to our member colleges individually to determine their fees policy - this applies to the refunds issue too."

Mr Cottrell said Canterbury College would be looking to refund learners, adding: "It just seems wrong that we're taking from the treasury and taking from learners as well."

"Otherwise you might get a situation where we don't charge learners going forward, now that we've got the concession, and end up retaining fees from learners who enrolled before the concession was granted - and we

can't have that situation."

Dr Roger Minett, Chair of the 157 Group Policy Network and Executive Director of Birmingham Metropolitan College said that the late change could cause logistical problems for many colleges.

"From a college point of view we welcome the relaxation of fee remission rules in order that those most in need of education and training can indeed avail themselves of it," he said.

"Whilst it would have been useful to receive this information prior to the main enrolment period and it would prove confusing and cause logistical problems if we sought to make refunds colleges can apply it to the next intake / enrolment period."

Miss Pearce said it would be unfair if some learners didn't have their tuition fees returned to them.

"Those learners who have already paid out of their own pocket for the opportunity to learn, having been told the Government would not fund them, will now not be eligible for a refund is a clear injustice and needs a rethink," she said.

Mr Cottrell said it would be difficult for a college to justify keeping the tuition fees and claiming the full funding for learners retrospectively.

He said: "I think it will be very hard to do, because then you could then get learners sitting side by side, in the same circumstances, some of which will have paid fees and some



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Vince Cable to focus on the other City salaries?

Nick Summers

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Vince Cable is calling for greater transparency of executive salaries at a time when top wages are being scrutinised in the further education (FE) sector.

The business secretary launched a consultation document at the Liberal Democrat conference last week that hopes to expose directors on top wages and give shareholders the right to block excessive pay.

The consultation paper, titled 'The Future of Narrative Reporting' has been published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and looks at proposals to improve reporting on remuneration.

This includes requiring companies to provide information on the links between the performance of specific companies and top executives earnings.

The comments by Vince Cable coincide with the 'you decide' column in the last edition of *FE Week*, which published the top salaries at two not-for-profit awarding bodies.

Charity Commission records show that City & Guilds had 105 employees with a salary of at least £60,000 in 2010, of which four were more than £200,000.

The top salary for Chris Jones, Director General at City & Guilds, was in excess of £420,000.

A spokesperson for City & Guilds said: "As a successful business with a charitable purpose, our financial reporting is transparent and readily available to the public.

"We need the right talent, who are appropriately remunerated, in place to drive our business and therefore the industry forward."

In contrast AQA, a larger awarding body, had no-one earning more than £130,000.

A spokesperson for BIS said: "Awarding bodies are independent organisations and determine their own pay and other governance structures."

FE Week will continue to look at the salaries paid to executive positions in the FE sector.

See the top salaries in full on the *FE Week* website at: <http://www.feweek.co.uk/index.php/2011/09/15/fe-week-you-decide>

Some reader comments from *www.feweek.co.uk*

Richard Allinson said: "Is running C&G more difficult than running the country? Many of us would need much convincing that it is, I think. So why do they need 7 people paid more than the Prime Minister. Removing these costs would enable them to cut nearly 1.5% off their prices, with benefits throughout the education sector, especially FE."

Riaz B said: "Well done FE Week, it's about time we looked at the costs along the whole production line of FE / education. This should get a few feathers ruffled."



Adam Betts said: "Pretty loose definition of a charity. 'Charitable' legal entities are abound in this sector; even consultancy firms have this status. A nice way of avoiding various taxes, and a great way of 'reinvesting any surplus' back into the business – i.e. the salaries of senior management."

Warren C said: "In agreement that it doesn't feel like these salaries are in line with the organisation's 'charitable objectives', but I think you'll find that other recognised national Charities also pay their staff high wages. The public's perception of 100% of charitable donations going to the 'cause' is far from the reality."

Frank Tiipn said: "Who actually decides on the salaries of these people? The money is coming out of the public purse so where is the accountability?"

Anonymous said: "With all this dosh, perhaps they should be called City & Gilded! It's a bit sordid; A public money gravy train and profiteering wrapped up as charity... how much extra money could be spent on students and colleges if City & Guilds wasn't such a commercial organisation? I look at these salaries, and I get a bad taste in my mouth."

Submit a comment on www.feweek.co.uk for a chance to win an exclusive contributor mug

AoC research finds half let down by careers advice

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Calls are being made for guaranteed face-to-face careers guidance in the wake of a startling report.

Research released today by the Association of Colleges (AoC) shows considerable confusion among young people about post-GCSE options.

The study, released to mark the start of 'Colleges' Week, found half of pupils do not feel they have received enough advice from their school or academy in planning future careers and that only half receive advice from a specialist advisor.

It comes in the wake of the government's planned changes to create a National Careers Service by April.

Schools will be given duty to offer careers advice to their pupils - with the emphasis on how it is conducted, in their hands.

However, Joy Mercer, Director of Education and Policy at the AoC, said: "The research highlights the confusion among pupils about post-GCSE options.

"They are having to make serious decisions which will significantly impact on their futures, without enough information about the choices available to them."

She added: "Young people deserve to know

about all of the post-GCSE options available to them and their peers – including apprenticeships.

"These results suggest guaranteed face-to-face guidance from an independent source would be preferable to asking schools and academies to be the primary source of advice."

A spokesman for the Department for Education said: "From September 2012, schools will be responsible for securing access for their pupils to independent, impartial careers guidance.

"They will be free to determine how best to do that, including through engaging with external providers of face to face guidance."

The AoC study involved interviews with 500 pupils, aged 14 and currently studying for GCSEs.

It found while 63 per cent of young people are able to name A levels as a post-GCSE qualification, few can name any other available choices.

Only 7 per cent of pupils are able to name apprenticeships as a post-GCSE qualification, while 26 per cent could name NVQs, 19 per cent named BTECs, nine per cent identified diplomas and only three per cent named foundation learning courses.

Read more online @ www.feweek.co.uk

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FE Week profile

Wes Streeting ~ his story

Janet Murray

@jan_murray

The Chief Executive of the Helena Kennedy Foundation talks to *FE Week*

As a “geeky, gobby” free school meals kid with naff trainers, the young Wes Streeting was never going to win any popularity contests. But, he reckons, it was his own fault. “I won a book token in a school competition and bought a collection of speeches by Tony Blair and read it on the coach to and from games. I mean, what sort of kid reads Tony Blair’s speeches on the bus? I was asking for it really.”

In 1997, he stood as the Labour candidate in the Westminster City School mock election, coming second to the Monster Raving Looney Party. “I was a deeply unpopular kid so it was a miracle. I had kids coming up to me going: ‘I just want you to know I’m voting for Labour, not for you.’”

He laughs as he says this, as he does when recounting many of his school stories but admits that at times it was “horrible, really horrible.” Some of the bullying had a homophobic edge at a time when he “hadn’t even really thought about it” (Streeting came out when he was a university having struggled to reconcile his sexuality with his Christian faith). “Going to school in Victoria where kids are drawn from rough parts of east London, south London, north west London...you learn words that you never knew before,” he says, before adding resolutely. “But, you know, what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

Streeting’s determination and resilience have been instrumental in his career success, both as NUS president and in his latest role as chief executive of the Helena Kennedy Foundation, a charity that supports FE students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress onto higher education and beyond.

That he took on the job after his two-year stint as NUS president is no coincidence; he knows first-hand how tough it can be for working class kids to achieve their potential. Born in east London in 1983, Streeting’s parents, were just 18 and 19 when he was born and separated when he was a baby. While his dad was always around, his job at a local shipping company didn’t pay much and money was tight for his mum who was on benefits and would “struggle to put food in the fridge” some weeks.

Living in one of the most deprived areas of London and being a pupil at a failing school (Westminster City School was placed in special measures while he was a pupil there), meant the odds were stacked against his educational success. But with the help of his family, and “a few really supportive teachers at school” he went on to read history at Cambridge where he was pleasantly surprised to find it wasn’t

anything like the “unfriendly, cold, pompous, posh place” he imagined it to be.

And while Cambridge was where his political career began to flourish, it was the conservative MP Anne Widdecombe – and not Tony Blair – who first got him fired up about politics. “She made some comments about single parents when I was in secondary school. I can’t remember exactly what it was that she said, but do know it was the general Tory narrative about single mums and the benefits of 2.4 children, benefit cheats and all the rest of it. I just thought ‘I’ve got a single mum and she does her best for me,’ he says, crossly.

But tackling injustice is exactly what makes Streeting tick. After joining the Labour Party “as soon as he could, at 15,” he went on to become entertainments officer at Selwyn College, Cambridge where he “had every intention of prioritising socialising over socialism for a while.” But the government had started talking about introducing top-up fees, that would allow universities to charge students up to £3000 a year (up from £1000) which led him straight back into the world of student politics.

In his final year at Cambridge, Streeting ran a successful campaign to become president of Cambridge University Students’ Union and once in post, headed up a high-profile battle to save the university’s architecture

“I’d love to be a minister. If you get your hands on the lever you get stuff done”

department. An unsuccessful attempt to become vice president for education of NUS followed, but he did get elected to the part-time NUS executive. Undeterred, he stood again and went on to spend two years as NUS vice-president for education and a further two as national president.

As NUS president, he was an open target for criticism, but the “thick skin” he developed at school helped him through. His biggest achievement, he says, was last year’s general election campaign and getting 1000 parliamentary candidates to agree to vote against any rise in tuition fees in the next parliament, including high profile signatories like Nick Clegg, Vince Cable and Simon Hughes who later broke their pledge. “It became front and centre of the debate and I think became a symbol for the public’s lack of trust in the coalition and the Liberal Democrats, but also in politics in general,” he says.

Although it is little more than a year since the end of his presidency, “it feels like a lifetime”, says Streeting who surprised everyone by joining Price Waterhouse Coopers as an education consultant after leaving NUS. He left just a few weeks into the role after discovering that Redbridge Council, where he was standing as a councillor in a local by-election (he won the election and became



Picture: Nick Linford for *FE Week*

a councillor last summer), was audited by PWC, which was a conflict of interest. He then went on to work on Una King’s campaign to be London Mayor.

When his current job at Helena Kennedy Foundation came up, with the remit of supporting some of the most disadvantaged FE students, he knew immediately that it was right for him.

Since it was set up in 1998 as a simple grant-making charity that issued bursaries of £1000 for first year university students, the Helena Kennedy Foundation has grown considerably. Central to the work of the foundation is helping young people who don’t have what Streeting refers to as “money networks and know-how.” He explains: “It’s about ensuring they [the young people he works with] are well connected so it’s like...’ok, you want to be a barrister.

We know someone who has got chambers who can take you in.’ Or if they want to work in a bank ‘we know someone, here are the right courses to take, the right subject mix.’ It’s all about assumed and implied knowledge and that can have such a big impact on where you end up and your direction in life.”

Working with disadvantaged young people is “ingrained in the lifeblood and the DNA” of the FE sector and Streeting sees it as his role to “bang the drum” for FE and the success stories it produces. “Part of what we do is try and take those success stories and turn them into even greater successes in HE and in professions afterwards,” he says.

He is critical of many of the coalition policies introduced in the last 12 months, but thinks both the universities minister David Willetts and FE minister John Hayes stand out as politicians who – regardless of some of the “appalling decisions” made by government in the last year – are fundamentally on the side of Further Education.

The education secretary Michael Gove, on

the other hand, has “fallen out of a time warp from the 1940s or 1950s,” he says, particularly with the introduction of the new ebacc, which measures how many pupils achieve a good GCSE in English, maths, two sciences, a language and humanity. Streeting thinks a much more radical approach is needed.

“I think we actually need to tear up the rule book on education in Britain and have 6-13, 14-19 and 19 plus education because I think so many kids are pushed down the GCSE route as if they are standard qualifications.

But if we gave people at the age of 14 the option of doing different courses in different settings, I think you would get so much more out of them.”

Now 28, Streeting admits he has his sights set on a career in politics, and eventually, a role in the cabinet. “I’d love to be a minister. If you get your hands on the lever you get stuff done,” he says.

But he is in “no hurry” and wouldn’t “grab any old ministerial job that was going,” he says. It would have to be on issues he really cares about like education and social mobility.

Juggling his many different lives (that is work, council, and personal) can be tough though and he admits it is his personal life that usually suffers.

Although still a practising Christian, he admits he is not always very good at it. “It doesn’t help that Labour Party canvassing is at 10.30am on a Sunday morning, so I’m always forced to choose between God, the Labour Party and hangovers,” he says, with a wry smile.

He insists there is no “grand plan” for his political career but he is definitely open to opportunities.

“If I got the chance to stand in a seat that I care about then, yes, I would stand. If you really want to transform the country and transform peoples’ lives, then politics is the only way to do it.”

FE Week expert

Let's talk about sex



Young people are full of contradictions. Confident, yet uncertain. Outgoing, but easily embarrassed. Streetwise, yet naïve. Talk to them about S E X and all their contradictions all roll into one.

At a time when UK teenage pregnancy rates are the highest in Europe - in England alone 90,000 girls and young women under 19 get pregnant every year - and the incidence of

sexually transmitted infections are increasing, someone needs to talk about "it". But who? The obvious answer is parents. Research by the Sex Education Forum (2011) supports this, finding that young people say that parents are an important source of information about sex and relationships. Research also shows, however, that parents underestimate just how much their children want to communicate with them - two-thirds of parents believe their teenagers have no desire to discuss sex with them.

If parents are unable, or not willing, to talk to their children about sex then someone else has to. That "someone" is often to be found in a college or training provider. A colleague recounts a story of how a first year engineering student dropped his trousers in front of her and the full class so that she could determine whether or not he had "VD". Unphased, but unqualified to comment she calmly asked him to zip-up and referred him to the college nurse. Such stories are not unusual.

Young people place an enormous amount of trust in those they see as being in a position of responsibility. How far this responsibility can be taken without guidance and resources is, perhaps, a different issue. A recent survey by EMFEC as parts of Sexual Health Programme with Colleges in the East Midlands, identified that 48 per cent of FE staff were not aware of any guidelines for staff involved in providing

sexual health information to students. Supported by the East Midlands Strategic Health Authority, the survey also found that 59% of providers did not have access to an on-site health professional. Encouragingly, 76 per cent of those surveyed knew where to refer a young person if there was no on-site provision.

Regardless of any social or moral obligation to ensure that young people in colleges and other provider organisations are given the best advice possible, there is a strong business case for doing so; recognition in the Common Inspection Framework, for example, that attendance, retention and achievement improve when learners are healthy. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) also enhances the overall quality of provision and reflects favourably on Leadership and Management in terms of safeguarding.

It is clear that some form of sexual health provision in provider organisations offer young people flexibility, convenience and support which benefits both the individual and the provider. At a time when there is a shake-up of the NHS and public sector services face financial cutbacks the extent to which providers can address the sexual health needs of their learners is uncertain. What we can do, however, is to advise, provide guidance and know where to refer young people for professional help.

Paul Eeles, Chief Executive, EMFEC
www.emfec.co.uk and tweeting as @pauleeles

Sex ~ did you know?

A UK Youth Parliament survey found just 49 per cent of young people knew where their local sexual health clinic was.

Between a quarter and a third of young people have heterosexual intercourse for the first time before they are 16.

The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe and in England in 2009 the rate of conception for girls aged 15-17 was just 38.2 per 1000.

49 per cent of the under-18 conceptions, and 60.2 per cent of the under-16 conceptions ended in abortion.

Young people aged 16-24 represent 12 per cent of the population and they account for more than half of all new STIs diagnosed in the UK.

In 2008 the 16-24 year age-group accounted for:

~ 65 per cent of new Chlamydia diagnoses
~ 55 per cent of new genital warts diagnoses
~ 47 per cent of new gonorrhoea diagnoses
~ 44 per cent of new genital herpes diagnoses
~ 17 per cent of new syphilis diagnoses

Sexual abuse is the fourth most common reason given for calling Childline.

Source: National Children's Bureau (NCB)



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Director, Further Education and Skills Investment,
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Simon Waugh

Chief Executive,
The National Apprenticeship Service

Michael Davis

Chief Executive,
UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)

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FE Week expert

August riots ~ more fall out for further education colleges?



As half of the 1,700 people arrested after the August riots were under 21, colleges may find that some of their students or applicants were involved. Can colleges take action regarding misconduct occurring outside their premises? Should they do so?

Can you take action?

Colleges can “police their own gates” and take action under their procedures for misconduct occurring outside their premises provided the misconduct is a breach of the relevant procedure. Such procedures may include discipline, admission, enrolment, fitness to practise, safeguarding and fitness to study. Whichever procedure is used it must have been incorporated into the terms of the contract between the student and the college by being brought to the student’s attention at or before enrolment.

“If the college considers that the student poses an unacceptable level of risk then it may be appropriate to consider suspending the student as a neutral interim measure.”

Can you find out about convictions?

Most colleges’ application forms require an applicant to reveal unspent criminal convictions. But what if the student was charged or convicted after applying but before enrolment? If the college has a procedure requiring students to disclose any unspent criminal convictions

occurring after applying any breach of this may justify the college taking action. But even if a conviction is revealed the college will need to consider whether it is appropriate for such action to be taken.

Why might you decide to take action?

The college may consider that it is reasonable to take action because there has been a breach of its code of conduct or damage to the college’s reputation. The college may also find it is under an obligation to undertake a risk assessment. This should focus on whether:

- the student poses a level of risk to the health, safety and welfare of himself/herself or other staff and students, and
- whether that risk is capable of being managed (for example by the imposition of conditions such as regular reporting to a senior member of staff).

In respect of some professional courses the college may have to report to the relevant regulator any issue over the student’s fitness to practise the occupation concerned.

“A “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate - different colleges may take different approaches depending on their mission and resources.”

Why might you decide not to take action?

If there are ongoing criminal proceedings the college may feel it should suspend taking any action until the outcome of the proceedings is known. However, if the college considers that the student poses an unacceptable level of risk then it may be appropriate to consider suspending the student as a neutral interim measure.

Sometimes the police may ask the college not to take any action whilst their investigations are proceeding, for example to prevent tipping off. The college should normally accede to such a request.

Can colleges take different approaches?

A “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate - different colleges may take different approaches depending on their mission and resources. Devising procedures which are transparent, fair and robust and drawing these to applicants’ attention at the beginning of colleges’ dealings with them is vital to ensure that colleges may take action if they consider it necessary to do so.

Trish D’Souza, Solicitor, Eversheds LLP
trishdsouza@eversheds.com

FE Week expert

Lambeth College use partnerships to crack the employability challenge



As young people struggle to enter the labour market, colleges and other providers are doing all they can to help their students become more employable. But what if the employers won’t play ball?

Furious debate continues around what triggered the summer riots and how to prevent further unrest – too often generating more heat than light. Meanwhile, evidence of how to create the necessary new social networks and pathways for young people at risk of disengagement has seemed beyond our reach – until now. Through recent partnership work where we have effectively handed control over to the young people to find or create their own work experience, I would argue that Lambeth College has cracked it.

Our work shows that progress cannot be made without working with other organisations, taking a new approach which is about much more than qualifications. It also shows that the problems are not all with the young people – employers themselves are woefully lacking in those essential social networks and pathways. For many years the emphasis has been on getting a better qualified workforce and millions of learners at all ages now have certificates which recognise their skills. But this is not enough: research among employers showed us that they also want evidence of “employability”, by which they mean having the drive to succeed, the persistence to get the job done and being able to relate well to other people.

But while they are prepared to take a degree as proxy for these characteristics, they do not see the same qualities in an FE qualification; so our challenge was to give employers evidence that our young people can hold down a job. Using a small grant from the *Learning and Skills Improvement Service*, we joined in a project with Participle, the third sector organisation which works with socially excluded adults who have difficulty finding work. They had found that it was not always lack of qualifications that prevented adults from getting employment but lack of useful social networks.

People who come from families with few social contacts and little experience of employment are not likely to be familiar with the skills and attitudes expected in the workplace. Similarly, students from areas of high unemployment and social exclusion, and who have had very little work experience, will also find it more difficult to become familiar with employability skills. Moreover, they may have the added burden of being judged by their postcode: if they come from an area with the stereotype of gangs and worklessness, they will be assumed to have

low employability skills.

Our students needed a transforming experience that went outside the classroom to develop their skills and attitudes and show them new ways to contribute to their own success. Groups of BTEC students were set a challenge to design a project that would spend up to £1000 on getting their own work experience.

After four weeks each team had to present their scheme to representatives of the College and Participle and the winners would get the cash to put their ideas into practice. For example, a group of Health and Social Care students saw the opportunity to improve their own chance of employment while designing a process that could exist beyond their time at college. They set up a database of local employers willing to offer “bite-size” work experience opportunities and showed how this could be linked to a range of resources to include a text alert service, social networking to promote work experience, career events and open days.

The students were overwhelmed by the positive response from many employers, who were impressed by their enterprising attitude and were keen to give encouragement. The students also recognised the effects that being forced to go outside their comfort zone and work with people outside the college had had in building their own self-confidence. One told me: “I am usually very shy but I know now, thanks to the challenge, that I can do things I never thought I was capable of.”

And this work revealed something else about local employers that really gave us food for thought. Just as local jobseekers suffered from poor social networks, so did many small businesses. Family enterprises with little understanding of how to market their business and recruit the people they needed failed to thrive and often collapsed when the original owner retired. However good our students’ employability skills become, they will not get jobs unless local enterprises prosper.

The FE sector could be doing a lot more to help local business. Talking to employers showed that we are a trusted institution and we could become a place where people go to get a lot more than qualifications. As both local and central government become commissioners rather than suppliers of services, colleges could become a hub for local businesses where they can build networks, develop their skills, thrive and provide employment opportunities for their communities.

Richard Chambers
recently retired Principal of Lambeth College

FE Week expert

Managing the college reputation



Picture: Nick Linford for FE Week

The one major problem with burying your head in the sand ... it raises your backside in the air. This provides a perfect target for

people to start kicking it – and you don't get to see them coming.

FE Week agitator

Please, don't get me started on Colleges Week. Oh, go on then



I hate Colleges Week. Colleges hate Colleges Week. Journalists hate Colleges Week.

Colleges Week (26 September to 2 October) interrupts the genuinely good stuff that colleges do. It's a constipated, false celebration, where some group of individuals as well as the AoC and 157 Group and goodness knows who else decides to tell colleges what they will be celebrating, what to push, what to say in their press releases and generally take up the valuable time of lecturers, support staff, employers and learners.

The bold statement on the Colleges Week web-

site is particularly grating, it says: "Colleges Week 2011 has one clear aim – to help YOUR college connect with the communities it serves and reach out to unfamiliar or new audiences, boosting your profile to promote the benefits of college education."

So, for just one week a year YOUR college needs help connecting with its community. What does it do the rest of the year? Does it ignore its community? Does it ignore funding streams, take enrolment lightly and wave away its student targets?

Profile boosting – if your college's profile needs boosting, why not have a word with your marketing department and ensure your profile is boosted all year round, instead of just one week in the autumn term?

The Colleges Week PR blurb explains that this year 'Colleges Week is being held in the run up to WorldSkills London 2011 to deliver maximum impact'. Right, so, it won't be overshadowed then, by skilled learners displaying world-class talent and exciting competitiveness in an international setting? Or by the massive marketing spend that the WorldSkills team have had to throw about, ensuring that media coverage will be the best skills coverage that money can buy?

Colleges don't get funding for Colleges Week. How in a professional, serious marketplace can Colleges Week exist?

Perhaps we should have Courts Week. We could



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Head of MIS, Worcester College of Technology

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Protect your reputation



FE Week explores...

WorldSkills London 2011 starts this week



Nick Reinis

@FEnickr

While the world's best sports stars still have another nine months to wait until next year's 2012 Olympic Games, the skills sector is just days away from showcasing the best of its international talent.

Dubbed the skills Olympics, WorldSkills London 2011 will this week take over ExCel London, in Docklands, for four days, as young people go for gold in a space the size of ten football pitches.

More than 1,000 competitors from over 50 countries will battle it out in 46 skills such as car repairs, robotics, floristry and cooking, in front of a live audience of an expected 150,000 people.

With figures like that, and home pride at stake, it is no surprise the 43 young people who will represent Team UK in 37 skills are taking the event - which takes place from Wednesday to Saturday - very seriously.

As Karen Woodward, apprenticeship director for the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), explains, the journey to WorldSkills London 2011 has been "several years in the making" for Team UK.

It started, she said, around two years ago with national-based skill events to choose a select talent pool.

What followed has been hours of training, with each potential competitor - akin to their sporting neighbours - assigned coaches and put through strict, personalised training programmes.

She said: "If they performed well in the national competitions, they were then put in a shortlist of around 1,500 youngsters."

"Then, over the last 18 months, they have been tested and trialled to prove they are the best of the best in the UK."

But when the final squad was chosen back in June, for the selected members it was a journey well worth the time.

Mrs Woodward said: "It's a huge privilege



Ross Varnam, hoping to make sparks fly for Team UK at WorldSkills

for the Team UK competitors.

"It's a life-changing experience and a most definitely a career-changing experience. A lot of our alumni have gone on to be recognised, from WorldSkills achievements, as the best in the UK."

Fully aware of the honour it holds to be a part of Team UK, 22-year-old floristry star Victoria Richards has gone to great lengths to ensure she is as prepared as she can be for the competition.

In her bid for gold, Victoria has reduced her working hours at the florists in Aldridge, West Midlands, where she works, to part-time and has had little time to see her friends.

But she insists it will be all worth it. She said: "When I was selected for the squad and then finally the team, it's become more intense."

"I went down from full-time to part-time at work, which now means I work two days a week."

"You don't get to see your friends much, but they appreciate what it is that you're doing."

She added: "It means so much to me. I never thought when I started that I could do anything like this."

Despite hours of preparation, Victoria said the event is "a bit like stepping into the unknown" as she will not know what beautiful arrangement she needs to create until she steps into the exhibition hall.

She said: "With my skill, you have to learn around 20 different modules and you will get tested in eight to 12 of them."

"So you've got to know all the different techniques to ensure you're ready for what the test could involve."

With that in mind, how is she feeling?

"I'm feeling okay. If you asked me last week, I would've asked you not to mention it. I was very nervous."

"But now, it's a mix of knowing what to expect, but not 100 per cent how big it will be because you've never done it," she said.

Joinery competitor Adam Bushnell perhaps has more reason than most to fight for the gold medal at this week's event.

The 21-year-old came agonisingly close to making the Team UK team for the biennial event last time out.

However, he is using his disappointment as motivation. He said: "I'm taking it in my stride."

I've had a lot of training so I'm eager to get started and will be glad when it's all over.

"I was knocked out at the team selection stage last year so I've been doing it for four years now."

"I wasn't too bothered when I wasn't selected because I knew I was young enough to do it all again."

"But it did make me train harder to make sure I was selected."

Although Adam has a rough idea of what he will be asked to do, he is aware of the margins of error.

He said: "With joinery, if you make it too small, that's it. I hope to be able to get a medal but anything can happen on the day."

However what Adam, from Oxford, is 100-per-cent aware of are the opportunities the event can bring.

He said: "I'm only 21 so people tend to think I'm not that experienced but this will show I've got quality beyond my years."

With just hours to the start of the competition, questions turn to the aspirations of Team UK and their potential medal haul.

The team's bosses have high hopes for the medal table following a solid show in Calgary, Canada, two years ago. The 2009 competition saw Team UK finish sixth, up from 14th in 2007.

Mrs Woodward said: "We have high hopes for Team UK. They've performed well in national and international when tested against others. But it's still a nerve-wracking time for them."

She added: "We expect to be in the top 10. We exceeded our expectations in Calgary and this is a very good team so we expect great things from them."

We want to be seen as a leader of excellence in skills."

Worldskills London 2011: The Facts & Figures

For more information about Team UK visit www.worldskillsteamuk.org

Team UK, managed by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), is made up of 43 students, apprentices and employees, aged 18 to 24.

They will compete in 37 skills ranging from mobile robotics, electrical installations and graphic design to cooking, hairdressing and landscape gardening.

Four in Five

members of Team UK, successfully secured the opportunity after competing in regional and national WorldSkills UK competitions. Two in three are also current or former apprentices.

Each Team UK competitor has completed on average 100 days of training and assessment ahead of WorldSkills London 2011.

Unlike the Olympics, competitors can compete **only once** at WorldSkills Competitions.

Team UK is currently ranked 7th in the world after securing three Gold and six Bronze medals at the last WorldSkills in Calgary, Canada, in 2009.



A cut above the rest: One member of Team UK gets some practice in



Dedicated follower of fashion, Rory Andrews, working on some new designs



The blooming talented Victoria Richards getting ready for WorldSkills 2011



Team UK has been gearing up to go for gold in this year's competition



The UK manufacturing team tinkering away on their latest project



HRH Duke of York talking tactics with some members of Team UK

FE Week gets technical

FE Week brings you, on one handy **pull-out**, the second Lsect 16-18 college recruitment research findings.

Download the full survey spreadsheet from www.lsect.com/16-18-recruitment-survey-2011_v2.xls

Section 1. The role of the Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency is effective in its new role as a funding and regulating body

| Question 1.1 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 4% | 11 | 63% |
| Agree | 59% | 156 | |
| Disagree | 27% | 72 | 37% |
| Strongly disagree | 9% | 25 | |

264



The freedoms and flexibilities which have been introduced have enabled colleges and training organisations to manage the available funding more effectively.

| Question 1.2 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 9% | 24 | 61% |
| Agree | 52% | 136 | |
| Disagree | 30% | 79 | 40% |
| Strongly disagree | 10% | 27 | |

266



The Agency has provided the information and data required by colleges and training organisations to enable them to make business decisions.

| Question 1.3 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 5% | 13 | 47% |
| Agree | 42% | 111 | |
| Disagree | 37% | 98 | 54% |
| Strongly disagree | 17% | 45 | |

267



The Agency has made good progress in reducing the bureaucratic burden on the sector.

| Question 1.4 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 3% | 7 | 41% |
| Agree | 38% | 101 | |
| Disagree | 45% | 120 | 60% |
| Strongly disagree | 15% | 39 | |

267



The Agency's role in managing the quality and capacity of the sector is carried out effectively.

| Question 1.5 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 3% | 9 | 49% |
| Agree | 46% | 121 | |
| Disagree | 42% | 110 | 51% |
| Strongly disagree | 9% | 25 | |

265



Section 2. Skills Funding Agency Processes

The process for earlier indication of funding allocations has been effective and timely, allowing colleges and training organisations sufficient time to plan.

| Question 2.1 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 9% | 22 | 64% |
| Agree | 56% | 143 | |
| Disagree | 24% | 62 | 36% |
| Strongly disagree | 11% | 29 | |

256



The implementation of the policy to introduce a single budget for funding of adult training will enable colleges and training organisations to respond more effectively to labour market needs.

| Question 2.2 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 16% | 41 | 77% |
| Agree | 61% | 156 | |
| Disagree | 18% | 47 | 22% |
| Strongly disagree | 4% | 10 | |

254



The Agency's revised approach to Provider Performance Management and the redistribution of funding has been fairly and efficiently operated.

| Question 2.3 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 3% | 8 | 63% |
| Agree | 60% | 153 | |
| Disagree | 26% | 66 | 37% |
| Strongly disagree | 11% | 29 | |

256



The roles and responsibilities of the Agency staff that colleges and training organisations interact with are transparent and clearly understood.

| Question 2.4 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 7% | 19 | 51% |
| Agree | 43% | 111 | |
| Disagree | 34% | 88 | 48% |
| Strongly disagree | 13% | 34 | |

252



Queries and requests for clarification are dealt with promptly and comprehensively.

| Question 2.5 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 9% | 24 | 50% |
| Agree | 40% | 103 | |
| Disagree | 34% | 87 | 50% |
| Strongly disagree | 16% | 42 | |

256



Section 3. Skills Funding Agency Communications

Update, the Agency's weekly round up of business critical information and news for the sector is an effective way of communicating key information to colleges and training organisations

| Question 3.1 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 28% | 69 | 89% |
| Agree | 61% | 153 | |
| Disagree | 9% | 22 | 11% |
| Strongly disagree | 2% | 5 | |

249



The series of Guidance Notes has been helpful in providing detailed clarification on policy developments and contractual requirements.

| Question 3.2 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 18% | 45 | 80% |
| Agree | 61% | 153 | |
| Disagree | 16% | 39 | 20% |
| Strongly disagree | 4% | 11 | |

248



Direct written communication from the Agency to colleges and training organisations have been clear, relevant and timely.

| Question 3.3 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 8% | 19 | 61% |
| Agree | 54% | 134 | |
| Disagree | 31% | 78 | 40% |
| Strongly disagree | 9% | 22 | |

253



Communications from the Agency are written in plain English and free from unnecessary jargon.

| Question 3.4 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 9% | 22 | 75% |
| Agree | 66% | 164 | |
| Disagree | 20% | 49 | 26% |
| Strongly disagree | 6% | 15 | |

250



Queries and requests for clarification are dealt with promptly and comprehensively.

| Question 3.5 | Percent | Count | Split |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 4% | 11 | 53% |
| Agree | 48% | 120 | |
| Disagree | 38% | 94 | 48% |
| Strongly disagree | 10% | 25 | |

250



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FE Week campus round-up

VIPs open Microsoft Academy at Burton and South Derbyshire College



The Rt Hon Iain Duncan-Smith MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Stuart Pearce MBE, Head Coach for the England Under-21s football team, visited Burton and South Derbyshire College to launch a new Microsoft IT Academy.

The VIPs met with current students and business customers before conducting an official opening ceremony to launch the college's new Microsoft IT Academy.

The college launched the Academy after a report by e-skills UK highlighted that the technology profession needs another 110,000

recruits this year alone, with the IT and Telecoms Industry set to grow at five times the national average over the next decade.

Dawn Ward OBE, Chief Executive and Principal at Burton and South Derbyshire College, said, "Colleges have a vital role to play in supporting people of all ages to develop the knowledge and skills relevant to employment trends." She added, "The Microsoft Academy is yet another example of the college working with high profile companies in order to meet skills gaps and to give our students the best possible chance of career success."

South Cheshire College secures Olympic chance



Security firm G4S will be providing security guards for the 2012 Olympic Games and South Cheshire College will be used to stage the interviews.

This Tuesday the College will be helping G4S recruit young people aged 18 and above who are keen to land a security or stewarding job at the Olympics.

Anyone applying must complete or have completed a Level 2 Door Supervisors qualification and impress at the interview stage.

The College is also part of the London 2012 Get Set network and has encouraged students from different courses to get involved in a series of different Olympic-themed projects.

Sports Lecturer Chris Hollinshead said: "We are delighted that G4S have linked up with the College to stage regional interviews for security posts at the Olympics.

"Our students will join lots of other students from across the North West at next week's interviews and hopefully they will impress."

Sixty students at South Cheshire College have put themselves forward to be interviewed by G4S.



Students have a go at Filton College

Young people from the Bristol area are getting an opportunity to get hands-on experience of a range of skills at special "Have a Go" events during the national celebration of Colleges Week, (26 September – 2 October). The event is designed to showcase the opportunities offered by the college to the communities it serves and to open students' minds to the huge variety of career possibilities.

The students, invited from schools over the south west, can get involved in a range of activities such as Grass Roots Football Coaching, Indian Head Massage, Army Cadet Training and Media in Sport.

Colleges Week 2011, is part of a major nationwide drive to create one million opportunities for young people to try a bite-sized taster of a new skill, trade or profession.

Sara-Jane Watkins, Vice Principal at Filton College said: "This event provides a great opportunity to welcome many young people into our College, enabling them to try their hands at new skills and see for themselves what they can achieve in their careers. It's a great way of igniting a passion to learn, as well as helping us connect with our local communities."

Gold and Silver wins for Sparsholt College students

Sparsholt College Equine Centre is celebrating the success of Horse Management student Toby Small at the Junior Tent Pegging Championships in South Africa. Part of the inaugural junior team, Toby won one gold and four silver medals for Great Britain, with the team overall winning two golds, eight silvers and a number of bronze medals.

Tent Pegging is a sport which has developed from military training that would have been undertaken by the cavalry in the 19th and early 20th Century. The sport is practised in UK, USA, India, Pakistan, Australia, Oman, Holland, South Africa (the reigning world champions), plus numerous other countries.

When not representing Great Britain, Toby is studying for a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Horse Management at Sparsholt College's Equine Centre.

possible chance of career success."



London Irish RFC backs East Berkshire College's brand new Rugby Academy

Combining education and sporting excellence, East Berkshire College has launched a new Rugby Academy in partnership with one of the country's top rugby clubs, London Irish RFC.

To mark the official launch, students from the college's rugby team were invited down to the London Irish training ground in Sunbury-on-Thames to meet their sporting heroes face to face.

First team players were on hand to put the students through their paces, giving the students advice on tactics and training.

Forming part of the college's Sports Academy, the new rugby programme offers

males and females aged 16-19 the chance to study a full-time course whilst training to an elite level, with professional coaches.

London Irish and England winger Topsy Ojo said: "The College's academy provides young players with a great opportunity to combine rugby progression with academic development. The Academy will equip players with the skills necessary to continue their careers in sport whether their destiny is on the pitch or off of it."

When not representing Great Britain, Toby is studying for a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Horse Management at Sparsholt College's Equine Centre.

Chichester College student takes on world



A Chichester College student will take on the best cabinetmakers in the world at next week's esteemed WorldSkills London 2011 event, competing with 1,000 young people from over 50 countries across 46 skill areas.

21-year-old Chris Wallis from Midhurst will compete to be the 'best of the best' at the world's largest international skills competition, in an exciting 22-hour, four-day challenge at London's ExCeL from 5-8 October.

The former Chichester College apprentice, employed by the Edward Barnsley Workshop, has already endured a demanding selection process consisting of residential training, regional and national trials with coaching from WorldSkills trainer, Peter Legg MBE.

This is the third consecutive year that the college has had a student achieve a place on Team UK in WorldSkills and the next generation of Chichester star cabinetmakers is already on the rise. Edward "Woody" Harrington took silver last week at the latest Skillbuild final and hopes to be next in line for WorldSkills along with classmate George Callow and first year, Alex Morley.



Sun shines as EMFC show off pedal power

A twelve-strong team from the East Midlands Further Education Council (EMFEC) cycled for cash on Sunday 27 September raising over £800 for charity.

Taking part in the 17-mile cycle around picturesque Rutland Water in Leicestershire, the team, joined by family members, raised over £800 for the British Heart Foundation.

Despite early morning tweets and texts between team members about grey skies and rain, the sun shone resulting in an impromptu



Grimsby Institute plumber wins award

An Apprentice from the Grimsby Institute has won the national title of SkillPlumb Champion 2011, part of the International WorldSkills competitions.

24-year-old Tom King started his training with the Grimsby Institute's Department of Plumbing two years ago as an Apprentice Plumber, having already completed an Apprenticeship in Joinery.

Tom displayed a natural aptitude for Plumbing and his tutor at that time, Jason Laycock, realised that Tom had a talent for the accuracy of his pipework, which he attributed partly to the 'measure twice, cut once' mentality of joiners.

The final took place at Leeds College of Building with the UK's top 10 Apprentice Plumbers competing for the title of SkillPlumb Champion 2011.

Over the difficult and intense four-day challenge, Tom performed exceptionally well and was finally announced as the UK SkillPlumb Champion.

Tom will attend the WorldSkills events in London in October to receive his award, he said: "I really didn't expect to win. We were asked to spend the four days installing a bathroom suite which included the fitting of a couple of radiators, a basin, a shower, all of which was really difficult, especially the intricate pipe-work and the bends.

"I'm over the moon and to be honest really chuffed with myself, to win the national final is just an amazing feeling.



Former Birmingham Metropolitan College student gets book coverage

Having one of your photographs used on the cover of a book by a Danish author and also featured on the cover of an American magazine would be the achievements of a lifetime for most artists, but for Alexander Boardman, these were just the start of his success.

The former Birmingham Metropolitan College photography student has now had 15 of his paint-

ings and designs used as blanket covers manufactured by an online company in America.

Paintings created two months ago by the 23-year-old were spotted by fleece blanket makers, Blanket Service. The company will now provide Alexander with a percentage of the profits from every blanket they sell featuring one of his designs.



New 'dyslexia friendly' award means Cornwall College is spelling success

Cornwall College has become the first further education (FE) college in its county to be awarded the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

In the FE sector, the accreditation, from the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), is awarded to colleges who meet five standards which focus on areas including management structure, dyslexia identification, resources, staff professional development and partnerships.

Glen Stuart (pictured), who was identified as dyslexic by Cornwall College at 16 and has now

returned to study towards A levels at the age of 30, said: "I left school with very limited GCSEs and feeling very thick.

"When I went to study Equine at 16 I discovered that I was dyslexic, not thick.

"Over the years I have done courses alongside employment but always felt that I hadn't the education others around me had.

"I have owned a successful letting agency since 2008 and this has given me the confidence to know that I can do whatever I set my mind to and that I'm obviously not as thick as I thought."

Colleges Week showcases skills. . .

FE Week takes a look at what's on offer at colleges across the country during Colleges Week 2011



Radio DJ gets in Touch with Warwickshire College

Warwickshire College challenged a radio presenter to try some of their vocational courses as part of Colleges Week 2011.

Ollie Gallant, who presents the breakfast show at Touch FM, took part in five taster sessions which were then broadcast for five consecutive mornings on the station.

One of the challenges included scaling a tree 60 foot in the air with only a rope and harness.

The deadly ascent was designed to show Mr Gallant the physical side of the tree surgery and arboriculture course held at the college.

Tutor Andrew Panter said: "People don't realise how much physical strength you need to become a tree surgeon."

"Giving people a taster of this subject certainly helps potential students get a better idea of what is expected before they come on a course."

Mr Gallant's other tasks included grooming a horse, making clothes out of a plastic bag and constructing a working carpentry joint.

Mr Gallant said: "I never knew there were so many options available 'outside the classroom.'"

"If I was still at school and looking at what to do next, I would have absolutely loved to come to a college like this and do one of these hands-on sessions."

Warwickshire College set up the sessions to show students the land-based courses that they offer and what life as a college student is like.



Carshalton College

Carshalton College has been holding grand tours for visitors as part of Colleges Week 2011.

Potential students had the chance to look around the Renaissance hair and beauty salon, the Nightingales in-house training restaurant and student common room on September 28.

The tours also stopped at the motor vehicle and construction work spaces.

The Pulse Health & fitness Centre team were available to provide young people with tours of the college gym, swimming pool, dance studios and sports hall.

East Berkshire College

Young people were treated to 'bite-size' career tasters at a special event held by East Berkshire College.

Vocational activities on offer included bricklaying, hairdressing and manicures, motor vehicle maintenance and t-shirt printing.

Visitors could also participate in more energetic activities including an army-style assault course, non-contact boxing and drama games.

Blackpool and The Fylde College

Blackpool and The Fylde College has been offering students the chance to take part in a crime scene investigation as part of Colleges Week 2011.

The Open Day offered visitors a number of activities including 'You're Hired', 'Place Your Bets' and 'Under the Sea'.

Carina Gribbon, 14-19 Learning Partnership Manager said of Colleges Week: "It's a great way of igniting a passion to learn, as well as helping us connect with our local community."

South Devon College

South Devon College treated members of their music department to a disk-jockey master class from BBC Radio 1 DJ Ras Kwame as part of Colleges Week.

The college also held the Torbay Police Bravery Awards with student volunteers from the college's uniformed public services department.

The student union (SDC: SU) held a number of events with a healthy theme to celebrate the announcement that South Devon College has been recognised as a 'Healthy FE College' by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).



Southport College

Southport College had a local reporter come in and try aromatic massage, photography and motor vehicle maintenance as part of Colleges Week 2011.

The Southport Visitor sent one of their journalists to show potential students the variety of practical courses being taught at the college. It looks like he got stuck in!

Havering College

Havering College has been offering young people the chance to try hairdressing and CPR at a local retail complex.

Potential students visiting The Brewery Shopping Centre in Romford were taught how to bandage properly and use various lifesaving skills such as Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The college was also offering visitors the chance to try a range of hairdressing skills such as hair braiding, basket weaving and hair-up techniques.

The event, called 'Have a Go in Colleges Week', was designed to spark ambition and show young people the variety of career possibilities being taught at the college.



Hartlepool College

Hartlepool College of Further Education has been teaching young people how to make their own sweets, create light graffiti and beat a robot at table tennis as part of Colleges Week 2011.

The innovative sessions were put on by the college to show learners the creative side of some of their courses.

Visitors could try their hand at a number of vocational trades such as aerospace engineering, plumbing and beauty therapy throughout the week.

Other activities included piloting a flight simulator, dry stone walling and pyramid building.

And *FE Week* has a go!

To get into the spirit of Colleges week, we sent, roving reporter, Nick Summers along to Lewisham College to try his hand at a bit of welding

Welding and journalism are two professions that couldn't possibly be more different. While one involves typing frantically on a laptop and wearing shirt and tie, the other involves using industrial machinery, grubby overalls and working halfway up the side of steel bridges.

So it should come as no surprise that I was incredibly nervous about trying welding for the first time. Steve Granville, a welding instructor at Lewisham College, was kind enough to put me through the basics and explain how all of the protective gear would save me from instant death. Fireproof overalls, reinforced leather gloves, skull cap and goggles; you name it, I was wearing it.

Steve then showed me a piece of metal that was sharp enough to cut skin with a single stroke. It was my job to smoothen the edges using the machinery, a task would be simple were it not for the hundreds of sparks flying towards

my face. Nevertheless I had a go and I must admit, it was hugely enjoyable to work with the equipment and produce a few fireworks (not literally) in the classroom.

My efforts earned me a lesson on metal arc welding. This is when the afternoon got really dangerous. After being given yet more protective head gear (this time with a high-tech electric visor) I was allowed to use a high-powered blow torch to weld two pieces of metal together. The light emitted would damage the human eye and meant that I was unable to see most of my welding. The bottom of the page shows what I produced – no doubt I could do with some more practice!

Colleges Week is a great chance for students to try some of the courses that FE colleges offer. Lewisham College gave me a valuable insight into welding and I can't thank them enough for the opportunity. Think I'll stick to the journalism though...



Pictured, clockwise from left; Nick makes sparks fly at Lewisham college, How his handiwork compared to the professional's, Big smiles under the welding helmet, Steve Granville gives Nick his seal of approval.

Photographs: Nick Linford for FE Week.



FE Week gatecrashes the Labour party conference

At this time of year the news is awash with political headlines from party leaders promising what they are going to do for Britain. Conference season is one of the busiest times of the year for any political party. It is an opportunity to showcase a party's credentials and talents, in the hope of gains in the polls. This week saw the Labour party hold their annual conference in Liverpool; the first time since 1925. FE week's Shane Mann was invited by the Labour party to take part in the Prosperity and Work session of conference on Monday afternoon. Shane used the opportunity to explore Labour conference and find out who has been keeping up to date with FE news from FE Week.

Shane Mann
@shanermann

I first attended the Labour party conference in 2008, which was held in Manchester. At the time Labour were the party of Government and I recall the excitement of walking around the venue whilst casually bumping in to the odd Secretary of State or witnessing journalists running after their next potential story. For those that have had the opportunity to attend a party conference, it is a bewildering experience. But one that captivates you into the realm of politics and policy development.

This year I was asked by the party to take part in the Prosperity and Work debate on Monday afternoon. I was tasked with representing Further Education and to inform conference about the campaigns I led and worked



Shane Mann sitting on the 'Working Britain today' Q & A Panel

on in Norfolk, to save the transport subsidy for 16-18 year olds.

I was one of four others to take part in the debate. Joining me were; Gordon D'Silva, CEO, Training for Life, Sophie Jenkinson,

"An ex-cabinet minister when asked how they find delivering a conference speech replied, 'Its one of the worst experiences known to man.'"

chairwoman, Shropshire Young Labour and Michael Taylor, operations director at Fosters

Bakery and regional ambassador of the National Apprenticeship Service.

The debate followed key note speeches from, John Denham MP, shadow business secretary, Liam Byrne MP, shadow work and pensions secretary and Maria Eagle MP, shadow transport secretary. Who also joined us for the debate to provide a perspective from the Shadow Cabinet.

The debate focussed on our experiences in recent years and what we believed was needed to increase jobs, growth and improve public services.

Before it was time to enter conference hall we were all invited back stage for lunch and a quick rehearsal. All of us were nervous; it was

hard not to be, especially when an ex-cabinet minister when asked how they find delivering a conference speech replied, "Its one of the worst experiences known to man." At that point there was a sudden realisation from the four of us that, if they are nervous what hope is there of us calming down.

Following Eagle's speech the Q&A commenced. A wide range of issues were brought up from the panellists, from support for smaller companies to enable training to its employees to graduate unemployment. I discussed the issues around the cost of transport for young people in FE and the impact of the withdrawal of EMA. I even "shamelessly" used the platform to plug FE week, when referring to the survey we published last week from LSECT regarding student numbers this academic year.

For me personally, Maria Eagle's policy announcement before the Q & A, was music to my ears. Since studying in FE I have believed that transport should be free for young people in colleges and sixth forms. There was wide support from the panel and conference when I concluded that it is simply not good enough to provide a concessionary scheme. The government need to reinstate the EMA to ensure that no young person's education is hindered due to affordability.

Whilst at conference I also went along to several fringe events which focussed on young people. There was lots of debate around the quality of information, advice and guidance that young people will receive, now that services such as Aim Higher have now been removed. Liam Burns, National President of the NUS, explained his concern that young people will not be equipped with the information required when it comes to deciding on whether to move on to university.

Famous faces reading FE Week



Both Ed Miliband and Andy Burnham made reference to apprenticeships during their speeches. On Tuesday Miliband said, "Supporting the producers, that is what it means to be pro-business today. That is why I say all major government contracts will go to firms who commit to training the next generation with decent apprenticeships."

On Wednesday afternoon Burnham went further to announce Labour's new vision for apprenticeships. Burnham said "I want young people who aspire to apprenticeships to have the same clarity, ambition and sense of purpose. I want them to be able to find out and apply for

them in exactly the same way as people apply for university.

"So let's look at a national UCAS-style system for apprenticeships, raising sights, rewarding those who work hardest, giving all children hope and a goal in life."

Clearly these are only ideas at this stage and the policy of a party in opposition. However the idea of introducing a "UCAS style" application process is something that the sector needs to respond to.

Next week we have the party of government's annual conference, we await the Conservative party's next vision for FE.



"I say all major government contracts will go to firms who commit to training the next generation with decent apprenticeships"



"Let's look at a national UCA-style system for apprenticeships, raising sights, rewarding those who work hardest, giving all children hope and a goal in life"

At the recent Liberal Democrat conference the AELP held a fringe meeting to debate whether there was a solution to the NEET problem. AELP's Chief Executive, Graham Hoyle said that more emphasis should be put on getting basic skills right for all children. BIS and DWP shared the view that policy makers should look at securing 'sustainable employment' for people of all ages. The AELP said that the DfE could respond more effectively to the NEET issue by recognising employment as a positive outcome of the education system. Nick Clegg told the conference that dealing with the NEET challenge was "one of the most urgent issues we face," and that Britain needed to end 'silent snobbery'.



Keep up with FE Week's coverage of the Conservative Party Conference 2 - 5 Oct!



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City of Sunderland College

Clerk to the Corporation

Circa £15,000 per annum

Equivalent to 1 day per week (including evening commitments estimated at around 300 hours per annum)

Sunderland College is a large Further Education establishment in the City of Sunderland. It has five centres at Bede, Shiney Row, Hylton, St Peter's and Usworth where a wide range of education and training programmes are delivered to more than 12,000 students. The College is very strong in terms of its finances and achievements, and works in close partnership with the City Council, the University of Sunderland, Schools and many other organisations to support learning for young people and adults.

Due to the retirement of our current Clerk we are looking to commission the services of an experienced Clerk to the Corporation.

- You will be responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Instruments & Articles of Government and any other statutory requirements are met, for making appropriate arrangements for the efficient conduct of Corporation business, and for advising and supporting Corporation Members as appropriate.
- You will have previous clerking experience within the further education sector or equivalent.
- You will have the services of a full time administrator to deal with the day to day Governance administration work.

The Clerking services may be provided by a self employed person or by a contractor though in the latter case the Corporation would require the services of an appropriately skilled individual. A flexible attendance pattern (including evenings) for meetings of the Corporation and its committees will be essential though much of the associated work will be undertaken at a time and location of the service provider's choice.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

If you are interested, please email judith.ridley@citysun.ac.uk with details of your experience by **Friday 14th October 2011**.

Lecturer in Plumbing

£18,354 - £27,765 • Campus: Rodbaston • Full-time, permanent

The Construction & Engineering Department at South Staffordshire College require a Lecturer in Plumbing.

The role includes interviewing and selecting students through to preparing and delivering practical and theory based lessons as well as assessing students progress, both within lessons and to the awarding body criteria. As a plumbing lecturer, you will mainly teach and assess students at levels 1 and 2 many of these being full-time students. The role is based at Rodbaston in dedicated facilities alongside other construction programmes.

The successful candidates will have the opportunity to devise and further develop new systems to improve the outcomes for our students and be part of the development of some innovative training and delivery around renewable energies. This development may require delivery on other campus sites or at employers' premises.

To be successful, you will have a plumbing qualification at level 3 or Advanced Craft and significant relevant experience of working as a plumber or in a closely related skill area. Additionally, you will be a qualified teacher and ideally hold assessor and/or verifier qualifications.

For an application pack, please visit www.southstaffs.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies Alternatively, email your details quoting job ref HR1011/75 to recruitment@southstaffs.ac.uk

Please note all correspondence regarding applications and interviews will be via email unless otherwise requested.

Closing date: Friday, 7th October 2011.

Interview date: Thursday, 20th October 2011.

South Staffordshire College is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults and expect all staff to share this commitment.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, medical clearance and satisfactory references.

South Staffordshire College

Lichfield • Cannock • Tamworth • Rodbaston



www.southstaffs.ac.uk

On Site Bristol Team Leader Location: Cumberland Basin, Bristol

On Site Bristol aims to increase the employment and skills levels of local people through creating sustainable careers. A Bristol City Council led partnership project On Site offers support to the Construction and Building Services industry through apprenticeships and other local labour initiatives. If you share our vision we would like to hear from you. On Site's apprenticeship programmes currently deliver success rates 16% better than the national average for our sector.

We are looking for a Team Leader who can continue the development of our key apprenticeship programme. This post, reporting to the Project Manager, will motivate and lead a specialist team. You will have a good knowledge of work-based learning and the construction and building services industry. The On Site programme has developed across a number of key delivery and employer partnerships and your involvement in further developing these will be pivotal to our ongoing success.

This post is subject to Enhanced Disclosure Checks operated by Bristol City Council in conjunction with Criminal Records Bureau and Medical Clearance.

Apply online at our website <http://jobs.bristol.gov.uk/> quoting reference 22927. Our preferred method of application is online, if you are unable to apply online, please call 0117 922 4499 for an application form.

Closing date: 4 October 2011.

At Bristol City Council, we value having a workforce as diverse as the city we serve. We therefore welcome, develop and promote people from all sections of the community.



creating constructive careers





PROJECT MANAGER

Salary - £30k

The 157 Group – a membership organisation of 27 large, successful and regionally influential Further Education Colleges – is seeking to appoint a Project Manager to join the small and dedicated team of staff. The post will require managing a number of 157 project commitments as well as developing the established peer development networks for senior staff throughout our member colleges.

The post will suit a flexible and highly motivated individual with proven strengths in project management. The successful candidate will have a sound understanding of IT-related opportunities within Further Education and must be able to demonstrate an ability to effectively multi-task as well as outstanding interpersonal skills.

The post will be home-based, with proximity to London preferable, and will involve travel within England. This is a one year fixed term contract with extension dependent on the continuation of project funding.

For further information on this role and information on how to apply please go to <http://www.157group.co.uk/vacancies>

If you wish to advertise in future editions of the paper, please send your vacancies in a PDF format to claire.edwards@feweek.co.uk
You can find more job listings on the *FE Week* website: www.feweek.co.uk/index.php/jobs



FE Week Bingo Buzz Words

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week*'s biggest and smallest fan!

"Mostly this week I have been driving in my car - it's not quite a Jaguar"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter
[@daniellinford](https://twitter.com/daniellinford)

